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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	East Germany	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Minister Fritz Selbmann's Visit to BKO, Fuerstenberg	DATE DISTR.	22 October 1953
DATE OF INFO.		NO. OF PAGES	1
PLACE ACQUIRED		REFERENCE NO.	RD
		REFERENCES	50X1-HUM

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Beginning 2 May 1953, Fritz Selbmann, Minister for Metallurgy and Ore Mining, spent a 14 days' leave at the Foundry Combine in Fuerstenberg. He stayed in the plant area from early in the morning until late in the evening and tried to speed up construction work. On 5 May 1953, he wrote a letter to Minister-President Otto Grotewohl, stating that the Bau-Unionen of the building industry were to be blamed for sabotaging the construction work at the Foundry Combine, and that blast furnaces Nos. 5 and 6 would have been ready for operation but for the negligence of the supervisors. Selbmann demanded that State Secretary Josef Hafrang of the Ministry for Construction be reprimanded. Hafrang was ordered to report to the Minister-President on 7 May 1953. In the foundry, Selbmann complained of a lack of interest and zeal on the part of the metallurgical workers and the plant management. ¹

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1. **Comment:** This report tends to support the view that the decision to slow down the expansion of metallurgical and heavy machinery plants was taken by the SED Politburo on 8 June 1953 not only for political, but also for economic reasons. On 29 January 1953, effective measures had been demanded by the Council of Ministers to reinforce metallurgical production, especially by an expansion of the Foundry Combine in Fuerstenberg, where the erection of blast furnaces Nos. 7 and 8 was scheduled for 1954. The decision taken by the SED Politburo on 8 June 1953 indicates that the execution of these plans is improbable within the current five-year plan, and that the expansion of the steel works is scheduled to come to a temporary halt after the completion of blast furnace No. 6.

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